# TASMANIAN FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB INC.

established 1904.

# BULLETIN

http://www.tased.edu.au/tasonline/tasfield.html

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**Bulletin No. 306** (quarterly) **April 2002**

The Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club encourages the study of natural history and supports conservation. We issue our journal *The Tasmanian Nauralist* annually in October. People with a range of ages, background and knowledge are welcome as members.

Contact Genevieve Gates (6227 8638) for further information or write to GPO Box 68A, Hobart, 7001.

**Programme**

General Meetings start at 7.45 p.m. on the first Thursday of the month, in the Life Science Building at the University of Tasmania. Outings are usually held the following weekend, meeting outside the to the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery entrance in Macquarie Street. Bring lunch and all-weather outdoor gear.

*If you are planning to attend an outing but have not been to the prior meeting, phone to check as to the timing of the excursion (with* Genevieve Gates; 62 278 638 or Don Hird; 62 289 702). *Unforeseen changes sometimes occur.*

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| Thurs. 2 May. | 7.45p.m.: Andrew Hingston will speak about the Pollination of Eucalypts, involoving interactions with many other species. |
| Sat. 4 May | Meet at The Museum at 9.00 a.m. from where we will travel to Koonya on the Tasman Peninsula and in particular to Clark's Cliffs, an area of interesting wet sclerophyll habitat. The walk is moderately difficult so all-weather clothing is necessary. |
| Thurs. 6 June | John Ireson from DPIWE will talk on ***Biological Control of Weeds with particular reference to Gorse and Ragwort.*** |
| Sat. 8 June Excurs. | 9.00 a.m.: The Bluff River gorges, NE of Levendale, include precious dry sclerophyll environments and ideally fine weather for our first winter excursion of the year. |
| Thurs. 4 July | 7.45p.m.: At the time of going to press, both the July excursion and outing are TBA. Contact a committee member closer to the date to find out details. |

## Do you have an email address?

It would be much easier to advise members of change of meeting times or excursions, or remind members about events if we could use email. Please email Anna at robmce@netspace.net.au so we can place you on our email list.

**A reminder to all members that 2002 subscriptions are now overdue.** Please forward them to the Treasurer, at the club address ASAP.

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| $25 | single | $20 | Concession (pensioner/student) |
| $30 | family | $20 | Naturalist only |

## T.F.N.C. excursion to North West Bay river on 14th April, 2002

The weather was perfect on Sunday for this excursion to the North West Bay River near Leslie Vale. We followed the track to Cathedral Rock along the river looking for birds, snails and fungi. This part of the track passes through some excellent wet forest habitat, alas, (or was it thank goodness) this day it was too dry for huge numbers of fungi although Kevin managed a respectable snail list. When the track crossed onto the riverbed we carried on boulder hopping up stream until lunchtime where we had a very impressive view of the front of Cathedral Rock towering above us. Along the way we had passed a deep pool that looked ideal for swimming so 4 small boys and 1 big boy decided to return via the river bed and the rest of us followed a track that rejoined the Cathedral Rock track, enabling us to have another look at some forest habitat. As we were walking just above the river we were able to hear the loud screams of pain and exhilaration from the water babies as one by one they leapt into the "refreshing"(Marc) waters of the N-W Bay river (temperature about 6 degrees Centigrade). On the Field Naturalist side of things, Maggie saw a wedge tailed eagle above Cathedral Rock, the children saw 5 trout, Kevin found 3 stoneflies, a nemertean, 7 snail species as well as a late Microtis sp (onion orchid) and Gen and David's lean fungi list is as follows:

*Oudemansiella radicata*
*Paxillus muelleri*
*Cantharellus cibarius*
*Marasmius elegan*
*Laccaria* sp.
*Pluteus atromarginatus*
*Mycena* "sticky date"
*Scleroderma* sp.
*Russula* aff *lenkunya*
*Cortinarius* sp
*Mycena pura*
*Pholiota squarrosipes*
*Richenella fibula*
*Simocybe phlebophora*
*Amauroderma rude*
*Trametes versicolor*

Molluscs found on the April Excursion

**Natives***: Caryodes dufresnii, Paralaoma caputspinulae, Stenacapha hamiltoni, Prolesophanta nelsonensis, Cystopelta petterdi, Tasmaphena sinclairi, Planilaoma luckmanii.*
**Introduced:** *Arion intermedius, Deroceras reticulatum.*
Note: Both introduced slugs were extremely common, it is very unusual to find them so invasive in wet forest which is not directly adjacent to settlement. **Kevin Bonham**

## March 9 2002 Field Nats Excursion

Duckhole Lake was our destination for this excursion and 11 members plus 2 visitors set off on the short walk to this interesting lake.As usual we were hardly onto the track before being distracted by fungi and ferns!

Kylie had brought her plankton net and caught tiny water creatures in the Creekton Rivulet for us all to look at. The vegetation is an eclectic mix of rainforest and some shrubs we would have expected to find in much drier localities including a *Callistemon* (probably *pallidus* although we saw no flowers and the plants had grown very tall and lanky to reach the light) and a banksia. The track follows an old logging tramway and remnants of this could be seen plus an old 'shoe' or large metal plate used by early loggers to prevent logs from digging into the ground as they were being dragged through the bush.

We could hear lyrebirds and their presence was obvious from the large areas of scratched earth. Duckhole Lake has the appearance of a sinkhole and as there are a number of caves in the area this is the most likely explanation for its existence. Some of us planned to go on to Creekton and Adamson's Falls after lunch while the rest of the group waited for the fungi collectors before a leisurely return along the same route. Marijke and Leo, our Dutch visitors, were impressed by the range of fungi found in this area.

Five members set off on the route to Creekton Falls which took us above the lake under Adamson's Peak though rainforest marked with signs of a large lyrebird population including displaying mounds. Between Creekton and Adamson's Falls the track degenerates and in places is quite hard to follow. It follows beneath a rock outcrop which, according to David Leaman's description of the area, is dolomite. The leatherwoods were flowering and we found some unusual mauve coral fungi and bright red *Hygroscybe* After Adamson's Falls the track improved again and lyrebirds were again heard calling. The

track to Adamson's Falls is marked as closed at the junction with the road but if conditions are dry it is quite passable.

**Members on outing:**

Genevieve, David, Maggie, Pam, Marijke, Leo, Kylie, Tony, Janet, Geoff, Amanda, Gilbert and Anna (last 5 did Falls circuit)

**List of Fungi from March excursion to Duckhole Lake (9th March, 2002).**

*Cantharellus cibarius*
*Entoloma aromaticum*
*Marasmius* sp.
*Russula* "multicolor"
*Phelledon niger*
*Mycoacia subceracea*
*Mollisia* sp.
*Inocybe* sp.
*Alnicola* sp.
Golden disc on wood
*Paxillus muelleri*
*Amanita* sp.
*Bisporella sulphurina*
*Hypholoma brunneum*
*Xylaria* with sharp hair
*Polypore* "thin brown bruiser"
*Ascocoryne sarcoides*
*Stereum ostrea*
*Phaeocollybia ratticauda* gills, bleach odour
*Mycena* "bleach sulcate"
*Tyromyces pellicolosus*
*Mycena*, on wood, dark brown
*Russula marangania* cap and stipe, grey gills
*Mycena pura*
*Trametes versicolor*
*Amanita*, grey with yellowy annulus
*Lactarius clarkeae*
*Lactarius* brown velvet
*Descolea recedens*
*Torrendiella eucalypti*
*Leotia lubrica*
*Clavicorona* aff *piperata*
*Melanotus hepatochrous*
*Xylaria polymorpha*
*Phlebia* sp.
*Gymnopilus* sp.
*Russula persanguinea*
*Panellus ligulatus*
*Marasmiellus affixus*
*Diatrype* sp.
*Tyromyces caesius*
*Hygrocybe graminicolor*
*Clavaria zollingeri*
*Polyporus*, blood red
*Tyromyces* "black-yellow"
*Hygrocybe firma*
*Lycoperdon* sp.
*Phylloporus* sp.
*Phellinus wahlbergii*
*Bolete*, "grape"
*Armillaria novae-zelandiae*
*Mycena viscidocruenta*
*Panellus stipticus*
*Bolete xerocomus*
*Lepiota* "sooty"
*Russula* "red and yellow"
*Amanita ochrophylla*
*Clavulinopsis miniata*
*Discinella terrestris*
*Podoserpula pusio*
*Mycena* sp., small, white, free
*Inocybe* "blondie"
*Bolete* "lemon cadmium"
Stephen's bolete
*Paxillus curtisii*
*Omphaliaster* sp.
*Leucoagaricus* sp.
*Russula clelandiae*
*Camarophyllus* "coralie"
*Cortinarius* "venetian red"
*Hydnum repandum*
*Boletellus obscurecoccineus*
*Russula* brown stainer
*Tremella foliaceae*
*Chlorociboria aeruginascens*
*Mycena* "highlighter yellow"
*Entoloma rodwayi*
*Cortinarius* large, tawny
*Tyromyces pulcherrimus*
*Bolete* grey granular
*Mycena toyeyerlaricola*
*Mycena galopus*
*Tremella fuciformis*
*Hypocrea* "rufus"
*Hygrophorus involutus*

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Thoughts on Foxes

That has Tasmania has served as a last, or at least significant, refuge for several species is well illustrated by comparing the original geographical distributions of probable victims before and after red foxes became established in Australia. A repeated pattern is that vertebrates in the preferred prey range of the

fox suffered massive and often total population crashes in the years following fox establishment. Eastern Bettongs, Barred Bandicoots, Pademelons and Quolls are obvious examples, others such as Potoroos exhibited population restrictions to densely vegetated habitats on mainland Australia whereas in Tasmania they generally remain widespread and relatively common. Further afield, this pattern of introduced carnivores massively impacting on novel prey species is now well recognised on a global scale.

Our vulnerability in this respect has been considered and informally discussed by mammal afficionados for some years. Conservation issues have not been without deeply felt conflicts, often for largely spurious reasons, leading us to appeal for respect and moderation from all parties involved. The reported organisation of recent fox introductions, i.e. several introductions of multiple individuals at several sites, can have been no trivial undertaking on both sides of Bass Strait, especially given its covert implementation. This level of effort, together with the fact that there are no perceptible beneficiaries from fox introduction, imply what must be presumed to be vengeful and spiteful acts. The source of such motivation must from my point of view be speculative, but conflicts over exploitation of natural resources come to mind, especially where personal gains or imputed losses are large.

Tasmania's conservation culture has often suffered from acrimonious and polarised disputes. The recent fox introductions seem an unfortunate low point in this saga. As well as involving direct protagonists, this atmosphere has resulted in stultified implementation of effective conservation solutions, with all manner of schemes (like clearing urban willow infestations) striving for publicity while swallowing precious resources. Systematic conservation measures seem all too often to have become the poor relation rather than the main agenda. Even without the potential introduction of foxes this would involve actions such as thoroughly investigating the neglected basic biology of potentially impacted species such as Bettongs and Barred Bandicoots. The abandonment of community programs in these areas has to be disappointing.

What to do ? My feeling is that population dynamics has to be the basis of any realistic strategy. Early eradication, even if only having an outside chance of success, is worthy of investment, particularly given the apparent specificity of information received. Risk to individuals of non-target species is probably inevitable in such a strategy, although it might also be said that collateral damage to non-target species by 1080 poison is a well established, if not well acknowledged, local practice. If foxes do become well established then such efforts are likely to rapidly prove futile, despite popular mythology that shooting may effectively "control" introduced predators like feral cats and foxes. Politicisation of the eradication effort, e.g. by decrying the immediate lack of carcases, is opportunistic, unrealistic and unhelpful.

Ultimately, perhaps like terrorism, this seems like a sad chapter in our history, an act from which no real benefit is conceivable must finally demean us all. Don Hird

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## Royal Society of Tasmania Special Lecture

### *Robert Brown (1773-1858) - Adventures in Australian Botany*

Prof. David Mabberley, an authority on Matthew Flinders' expedition in *The Investigator,* spoke on the life and work of Robert Brown, naturalist on the voyage. Robert Brown was a Scottish surgeon who became one of the greatest scientists of the nineteenth century. His are the initials R Br found after the names of many Australian plants and it was his work which revised the Linnaean system of botanical classification to include fruits and seeds instead of just flower structure. He had great skill as a microscopist, using a single lens microscope under which he first observed the phenomenon known as Brownian motion by observing the movement pollen grains in water and was the first to observe and describe the process of meiosis.

It is fascinating to contemplate the sense of discovery Brown must have felt as he collected and described so many Australian plants for the first time.

**A footnote**: It was cheering to see that it is not only the Life Science projector which fails at embarrassing and awkward moments. The CSIRO projector also gave up in the middle of the lecture!

Anna McEldowney